

# **Women and Minorities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Fields Program (WAMS)**

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***FY2010 Request for Applications***

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: June 7, 2010**



**U.S. Department of Agriculture**

**National Institute of Food and Agriculture**

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE;  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**WOMEN AND MINORITIES IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY,  
ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS FIELDS PROGRAM (WAMS)**

**INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE:** This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.318.

**DATES:** Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on **June 7, 2010** (5:00 pm Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

**STAKEHOLDER INPUT:** The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is requesting comments regarding this (RFA) from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and will be used to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). This section requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on a current RFA from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, education and extension for use in formulating future RFAs for competitive programs. Written stakeholder comments on this RFA should be submitted in accordance with the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this notice.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy and Oversight Branch; Office of Extramural Programs; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; USDA; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: [RFA-OEP@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:RFA-OEP@nifa.usda.gov). (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms). In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Women and Minorities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Fields Program RFA (WAMS).

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** NIFA announces the availability of grant funds and requests applications for the Fiscal Year 2010 Women and Minorities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Fields Program (WAMS) to increase participation in (i) Promotion of a safe, sufficient, and nutritious food supply for all Americans and for people around the world; (ii) Sustainable agricultural policies that foster economic viability for small and mid-sized farms and rural businesses, protect natural resources, and promote value-added agriculture; (iii) national leadership in climate change mitigation and adaptation; (iv) Building a modern workplace with a modern workforce; and (v) Support for 21<sup>st</sup> century rural communities. The purpose of this program is to increase America's competitiveness by expanding participation in new

economic enterprises by increasing numbers of women and other members of the U.S. population who are traditionally underrepresented in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. The WAMS program provides resources to advance a food and agricultural STEM workforce that is robust, diverse, and highly competent in the application of STEM knowledge and skills, and to increase participation by women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas. Specifically, the purpose of the WAMS grant program is to support research and extension projects that: Provide STEM knowledge, skills and competencies to women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas with successful placement (a) in the workforce in STEM fields, or (b) as innovators and entrepreneurs adding value to the STEM fields in areas that have relevancy to the USDA Secretary's priorities of Sustainable Energy; Climate Change; Food Safety; Nutrition and Childhood Obesity; and Global Food Security and Hunger. Eligible applicants are strongly encouraged to develop public-private alliances and advisory groups that allow coordination and access to resources which will ensure successful placement of WAMS participants in STEM fields that address USDA mission science. The amount available for support of this program in FY 2010 is approximately \$364,000.

This notice identifies the objectives for WAMS projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a WAMS award. NIFA additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next RFA for this program.

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## **PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Legislative Authority and Background**

Legislative authority for the Women and Minorities in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Fields (WAMS) program is contained in Section 7204 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA) (Pub. L. 110-246), which amends Section 1672 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5925) which authorizes the Secretary to make competitive grants to support research and extension activities to increase participation by women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, with priority given to eligible institutions that carry out continuing programs funded by the Secretary.

### **B. Purpose and Priorities**

The Women and Minorities in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Fields Program (WAMS) is a competitive grants program supporting research and extension projects. The program funds projects that will increase, to the maximum extent practicable, participation by women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields. The WAMS program will enable women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas to be significant and equal contributors in expanding the USDA-relevant Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) workforce by increased participation in (i) Promotion of a safe, sufficient, and nutritious food supply for all Americans and for people around the world; (ii) Sustainable agricultural policies that foster economic viability for small and mid-sized farms and rural businesses, protect natural resources, and promote value-added agriculture; (iii) national leadership in climate change mitigation and adaptation; (iv) Building a modern workplace with a modern workforce; and (v) Support for 21<sup>st</sup> century rural communities. The goal of the WAMS program is to develop and implement robust collaborations to increase the representation, participation, and entrepreneurial skills and abilities of women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas in STEM careers, thereby contributing to economic prosperity in rural areas across the nation. The approaches to realize this goal will lead to the development of a robust and diverse food and agricultural STEM workforce that is highly competent in the application of STEM knowledge and skills, with increased participation of women and minorities from rural areas across a broad spectrum of rural, local, state or national communities.

The WAMS program has the objective to advance women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas in innovative and entrepreneurial enterprises in STEM fields relevant to USDA mission sciences through research and extension projects that: (i) focus on alignment to any of the six (6) priority areas, (ii) demonstrate scalability, portability, adaptability, and utility for increasing the numbers of women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas gaining STEM knowledge, skills and capabilities; (iii) enhance economic prosperity and increase America's competitiveness; (iv) demonstrate

robust partnerships that create optimal scope and delivery, and enhance participation of women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas to impact federal, state or local needs in STEM fields; and (v) create synergies to ensure project success from a life cycle perspective (from recruitment of the WAMS program target beneficiaries through their successful participation in the STEM fields in the workforce.) To contribute to America's competitiveness, WAMS target beneficiaries – Women and Minorities from Rural Areas – will have a greater probability of placement into the workforce where they can have a direct impact on the rural economy.

Preference will be given to WAMS projects that (i) address at least one of the following priority areas: (1) Sustainable energy, (2) Global food security and hunger, (3) Climate change, (4) Nutrition and prevention of childhood obesity, (5) Food Safety, and (6) Sustainable rural economies; and (ii) demonstrate robust and participatory collaborations that will facilitate nontraditional partnerships in disciplines and sectors, preparing women and minorities from rural areas to become gainfully employed in the STEM workforce.

### **C. Program Area Description**

In FY 2010, applications may be submitted to the Women and Minorities in STEM Fields program using Program Code WAM. Award size will range from a minimum of \$75,000 to a maximum of \$300,000 as appropriate to the project type proposed. Project types are described in Part II, C. Project periods may range from 18 to 36 months in duration with a five year statutory limitation on the availability of funds.

Eligible institutions, that carry out continuing research and extension programs funded by the Secretary, may propose research and extension projects in any discipline(s) of the food and agricultural sciences. For the WAMS grant program to have a sustaining impact on women and minorities from rural areas, projects must be creative in addressing the educational pipeline issues related to participation in STEM fields. Examples of initiatives that WAMS might support include, but are not limited to:

- Implementing multi-track technology career advancement training programs and providing related services to engage and encourage participation by women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas in STEM fields;
- Developing and administering training programs for educators, career counselors, and industry representatives in recruitment and retention strategies to increase and retain women and underrepresented minority students and job entrants into STEM fields; and
- Supporting education-to-workforce programs for women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas to provide counseling, job shadowing, mentoring, and entrepreneurial internship opportunities to guide participants in the academic, training, and work experience needed for STEM careers.

Collaborative arrangements for WAMS projects will allow applicants to leverage increased opportunities for WAMS project beneficiaries to develop knowledge, skills and competencies that are relevant to the STEM workforce needs in rural communities. Robust collaborations would enhance the smooth transition of WAMS project beneficiaries into gainful employment and advance America's competitiveness.

### **Available Program Area Reference Materials**

To enhance America's competitiveness, the STEM workforce has to be prepared in new ways to leverage nontraditional partnerships in disciplines, and sectors. WAMS projects will give beneficiaries the ability to address complex issues, including renewable energy, climate change and food safety. The following reference materials will be helpful in supporting your application and improving your proposed WAMS project. A new National Academies Report on *The New Biology for the 21st Century: Ensuring the United State Leads the Coming Biology Revolution* is a highly recommended reference as it provides vision for addressing the major societal challenges of food, climate, energy, and health. The report lays out potential for the coordinated and focused approach needed, using integrative support and ownership, to address fundamental problems faced by society. The WAMS program is an opportunity to begin to give attention to the recommendations to produce future innovations and innovators in STEM fields integral to the food and agricultural systems domain.

The National Academy of Science 2009 report entitled, *Transforming Agricultural Education for a Changing World* recommends that academic institutions with undergraduate programs in agriculture implement nine steps to better meet the needs of students, employers, and the broader society. For information on the full report, please refer to [http://dels.nas.edu/ag\\_education/report.shtml](http://dels.nas.edu/ag_education/report.shtml) and click on recommendations.

A 2009 white paper on Human Capacity Development was prepared by the Academic Programs Section of the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities. A WAMS project can benefit more women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas by leveraging the educational activities of beneficiaries of funded WAMS projects. Copies of the white paper entitled "Human Capacity Development - The Road to Global Competitiveness and Leadership in Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (FANRRS)," can be found at: <http://www.aplu.org/NetCommunity/Document.Doc?id=1639>.

For the purpose of the WAMS program, underrepresented minority means any ethnic group – African American, Alaskan Native, American Indian, Asian-American, Hispanic American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, or any other group – whose representation among food and agricultural professionals in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields is disproportionately less than their proportion in the general population as indicated in standard statistical references, or as documented on a case-by-case basis by national survey data submitted to and accepted by the Secretary.

### **Stakeholder Input on WAMS Grants Program**

To align WAMS projects with workforce opportunities in STEM fields, as part of the WAMS application, a detailed plan is required that describes, establishes, and implements a process for gathering Stakeholder input regarding the focus of the planned activities of this program. Accordingly, each applicant must:

- a) Report actions taken to seek Stakeholder input (includes from Federal, State, and local programs; public-private partners; and others) that encourages their participation;
- b) Provide a brief statement on the process used by the recipient institution to identify individuals and groups who are Stakeholders and to collect input from them; and
- c) Provide a statement of how collected input was considered.

Each applicant must submit with the application, a report not to exceed one page (double spaced) that describes actions to seek stakeholder input on priorities to address participation of women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas in STEM fields relevant to the USDA mission, and how this was considered in setting proposed project goals. See Part IV, B, 3(f) for information on attaching this report to the application.

The Women and Minorities in STEM Fields program encourages projects that develop content suitable for delivery through eXtension ([http://about.extension.org/mediawiki/files/5/51/EXECUTIVE\\_SUMMARY - March 14%2C 2006 - YEAR 2.pdf](http://about.extension.org/mediawiki/files/5/51/EXECUTIVE_SUMMARY_-_March_14%2C_2006_-_YEAR_2.pdf)). This content is for end users, as opposed to staff development, and must align with the eXtension Implementation Plan (available at <http://about.extension.org/wiki/Planning>). Funds may be used to contribute to existing Communities of Practice (COPs) ([http://about.extension.org/wiki/Glossary\\_of\\_eXtension\\_Terms#Community\\_of\\_Practice .28CoP.29](http://about.extension.org/wiki/Glossary_of_eXtension_Terms#Community_of_Practice_.28CoP.29);) or form new COPs that focus on the STEM work force in USDA mission areas (for examples of developing COPs and guidance on forming COPs, see [http://cop.extension.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://cop.extension.org/wiki/Main_Page)).



## **PART II—AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Available Funding**

Approximately \$364,000 will be available to fund successful applications in FY 2010. There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

Awards issued as a result of this RFA will have designated the Automated Standard Applications for Payment System (ASAP), operated by the Department of Treasury's Financial Management Service, as the payment system for funds. For more information see [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/method\\_of\\_payment.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/method_of_payment.html).

### **B. Types of Applications**

In FY 2010, applications may be submitted to the WAMS Program as New applications. This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the WAMS program. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

There are no limitations on the number of applications that may be submitted by an eligible institution, as defined in Part III, A. However, institutions are encouraged to establish mechanisms that limit their submissions to high quality applications that have the greatest potential to achieve successful WAMS program goals and outcomes in STEM fields relevant to USDA mission science, as identified by the Secretary.

In FY 2010, eligible applicants are restricted to one WAMS award as the lead institution. However, there are no restrictions on the number of sub-awards any eligible applicant may enter into for additional FY 2010 WAMS projects. Eligible applicants are described in Part III, A.

### **C. Project Types**

In FY 2010, NIFA is soliciting WAMS applications for one of two project types: (i) **Single Applicant Projects**; and (ii) **Joint Applicant Projects**:

Project periods for either project type may range from 18 to 36 months. Recipients may be eligible for no-cost extensions, but no carry over or extension is permitted for these projects beyond five years. Any unexpended funds must be returned to the U.S. Treasury.

#### **Single Applicant Projects:**

In a **Single Applicant Project** application, the applicant proposes to conduct the research and extension project with one eligible institution as the principal. There are no restrictions on the number of sub-awards an eligible applicant may enter for additional FY 2010 WAMS projects. Applicants may request between \$75,000 and \$150,000 total (including indirect costs), not per year.

**Joint Applicant Projects:**

Applicants may request up to \$300,000 total (including indirect costs), not per year. In a **Joint Applicant Project** application, a minimum of three entities, with no more than two in the same domain, will propose to execute the research and extension project as part of a collaborative arrangement. To demonstrate a substantial involvement with the project, **the applicant institution/organization submitting a joint project proposal must retain at least 30 percent of the awarded funds, and no cooperating entity may receive less than 10 percent of awarded funds.** The fourteen (14) WAMS referenced domains for FY 2010 are: (i) Education, 4-Year Post-secondary; (ii) Education, 2-Year Post-secondary; (iii) Education, Grades 10 – 12; (iv) Education, Grades 7 – 9; (v) Education, Grades 4 – 6; (vi) Education, Grades 1 – 3; (vii) Education, Home-School Associations; Virtual STEM Education; Pre-K – K; (viii) Informal Education incl. Science Museums, Zoos, Botanical Gardens, etc.; (ix) Government – State; City; Local; Region; Tribal Nations; (x) Government – Federal Agency incl. U.S. Small Business Administration; (xi) Non-Profit: Private or Public (incl. Regional Centers); (xii) For-Profit: Private or Public; (xiii) Professional Group: Society, Trade Groups, etc.; and (xiv) Foundations and Community Groups.

For any WAMS application, **robust collaboration** that enhances development of competitive proposals in either project type will receive priority. Applicants must demonstrate coordination and relevance of the project to federal, state and local government programs to increase successful participation of women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas in STEM fields. Any collaborating institution or organization must assign co-PD(s) with appropriate training or expertise to carry out their contribution to the proposed WAMS project. Biographical Sketch, Current and Pending Support and Conflict of Interest forms of the PD and Co-PDs must be submitted with the application for NIFA review and approval.

## **PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

Applications may be submitted by eligible applicants and may be a collaborative state, tribal, local, or regionally-based network or partnership of public or private entities. Eligible applicants are: (a) State agricultural experiment stations; (b) colleges and universities; (c) university research foundations; (d) other research institutions and organizations; (e) Federal agencies; (f) national laboratories; (g) private organizations or corporations; (h) individuals; or (i) any group consisting of 2 or more of the entities described in subparagraphs (a) through (h). Priority will be given to eligible institutions that carry out continuing programs funded by the Secretary.

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of project goals and objectives. An applicant's failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of an application deadline will result in NIFA failing to review, or even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award.

### **B. Request for Determination**

If an applicant proposes to submit an application to assist an underrepresented minority group or groups from a rural area that is not specifically identified in the Definitions section of the RFA (see Part VIII.E), the applicant must submit to NIFA documentation, including national survey data, supporting the request. This documentation must be submitted as part of the requestor's application package and must be received by NIFA by the applicable program deadline. The Secretary of Agriculture or designated individual will determine whether the group or groups identified are eligible under this program.

### **C. Cost Sharing or Matching**

Grant recipients are required to match the USDA funds awarded on dollar-for-dollar basis from non-Federal sources with cash and in-kind contributions (see Part IV, B. 6. for details).

NIFA may waive the matching funds requirement for a grant if NIFA determines that:

- (a) the results of the project, while of particular benefit to a specific agricultural commodity, are likely to be applicable to agricultural commodities generally; or
- (b) the project involves a minor commodity, the project deals with scientifically important research, and the grant recipient is unable to satisfy the matching funds requirement.

## PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### A. Electronic Application Package

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov to NIFA in response to this RFA.

Prior to preparing an application, it is suggested that the Project Director (PD) first contact their organization's Authorized Representative (AR) (also referred to as the Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grant.gov. If the organization is not prepared, the AR should see [http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get\\_registered.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp) for steps for preparing to submit applications through Grants.gov.

The steps to access application materials are as follows:

1. In order to access, complete and submit applications, applicants must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov. This software is essential to apply for NIFA Federal assistance awards. For basic system requirements and download instructions, please see [http://www.grants.gov/help/download\\_software.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp). To verify that you have a compatible version of Adobe Reader, Grants.gov established a test package that will assist you in making that determination. Grants.gov Adobe Versioning Test Package: <http://www.grants.gov/applicants/AdobeVersioningTestOnly.jsp>.
2. The application package must be obtained via Grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov>, click on "Apply for Grants" in the left-hand column, click on "**Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions**," enter the funding opportunity number, **USDA-NIFA-WAMS-003137**, in the appropriate box and click "Download Package." From the results, click "Download" again to access the application package.

Contained within the application package is the "NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov." This Guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information about how to use a Grant Application Package in Grants.gov, and instructions on how to complete the application forms.

**If assistance is needed to access the application package** (e.g., downloading or navigating Adobe forms), refer to resources available on the Grants.gov Web site first (<http://grants.gov/>). Grants.gov assistance is also available as follows:

Grants.gov customer support

Toll Free: 1-800-518-4726

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Closed on [Federal Holidays](#)

Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

See <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/electronic.html> for additional resources for applying electronically.

## B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Electronic applications should be prepared following Part V and VI of the document entitled “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov.” This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed in order to prepare an application in response to this RFA. If there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding. **Note the attachment requirements (e.g., portable document format) in Part III section 3. of the Guide. ANY PROPOSALS CONTAINING NON-PDF DOCUMENTS WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM NIFA REVIEW. Partial applications will be excluded from NIFA review. With documented prior approval, resubmitted applications will be accepted until close of business on the closing date in the RFA.**

If you do not own PDF-generating software, Grants.gov provides online tools to assist applicants. Users will find a link to “Convert Documents to PDF” on <http://grants.gov/assets/PDFConversion.pdf>.

### 1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 2. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

- a. *Field 8.* Type of Application – Only ‘New’, applications are being accepted.
- b. *Field 20.* Pre-application – Do not fill out this portion of the form.

### 2. SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 3. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

### 3. R&R Other Project Information

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 4. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

- a. *Field 7.* Project Summary/Abstract (PDF attachment).
  - 1. The summary should not exceed **250 words**. Title the attachment ‘Project Summary’ in the document header and save file as ‘Project Summary’. The importance of a concise, informative Project Summary cannot be overemphasized.
  - 2. Include the names and affiliated organizations of all PDs and Co-PDs.
  - 3. Include the title of the project (must be descriptive of the program).
  - 4. Indicate the specific FY 2010 Project Type for which you are applying and which specific program priority(ies) the proposed research and extension project addresses (see Part I, B). Identify the target audience (include which rural area(s), gender, age, and other characteristics of the proposed participants of the target audience

5. The summary must be a self-contained specific description of the activity to be undertaken and should focus on goals, strategies and anticipated project outcomes that align with the WAMS program purpose, priorities, and goal.

b. *Field 8. Project Narrative* (PDF attachment).

Title the attachment 'Project Narrative' in the document header and save file as 'Project Narrative'. This page limitation applies regardless of whether figures or tables are included. All pages, including those with figures and tables, should be numbered sequentially. Applications exceeding the applicable page limitation will not be reviewed. The page limit has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition.

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Narrative **shall not exceed 12 pages** of written text, one-and-a-half spaced, with one inch margins and "Times New Roman" 12-point font. The Project Narrative must include the following section headings:

1. **Introduction.** The introduction should include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives of the proposed project. Justify the need for the proposed project by identifying the beneficiary target audience(s) and explaining their needs (size, region, potential economic value of trained beneficiaries, etc); and by briefly summarizing all the other similar WAMS research and extension training programs that are available for the identified target audience. Discuss the potential long-range impacts of the proposed project on the participation of women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas in STEM fields, relevant to USDA mission. Describe in detail the applicant's experience with USDA-funded programs in serving the identified audiences of women and underrepresented minorities in rural areas.
2. **Target Audience(s) and STEM Fields.** Define the baseline and describe information gathered from which variations will be measured. Identify who is being impacted by the project activities; which priority areas are to be addressed; new participants in USDA mission science through outreach activities, and new careers or entrepreneurial enterprise by participants in STEM fields. State what percentage of your budget will be allocated to serving these group(s).
3. **Rationale and Significance.** Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed project. Explain the specific relationship of the proposed project's objectives and priority(ies) to the selected Project Type; and describe the alignment of the proposed project with the WAMS program purpose, priorities, and goal. Any novel ideas or contributions that the proposed project offers should also be discussed in this section.
4. **Approach.** The activities proposed or problems being addressed must be clearly stated and the approaches being applied clearly described. Specifically, this section must include:

- A description of the activities proposed and the sequence in which the activities are to be performed;
  - How and where will the activities be provided;
  - For each WAMS Project type, how will the women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas be recruited for participation as beneficiaries of the project;
  - For each WAMS Project type, how will the life cycle perspective (beneficiary recruitment to placement in STEM fields relevant to USDA mission) be addressed;
  - For each WAMS project, how will the coordination with work force placement opportunities and venture capitalism in STEM fields to enhance economic prosperity take place;
  - How will cutting edge research and extension be utilized in partnerships to provide mentored experiences for women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas in STEM Fields;
  - How will project scalability in advancing WAMS innovation/entrepreneurism in STEM fields relevant to USDA mission science occur;
  - Describe how the project participants will be tracked up to two (2) years post-participation as beneficiaries;
  - Samples of expected outcomes for WAMS grants could include, where appropriate, projected estimates of: numbers of women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas served, how many develop competency to launch successful STEM enterprises within 18 months of completion of project participation; number engaging in STEM experiential activities with Grades Pre-K through Lifelong (P-L); number launching STEM related projects that are Pre-K thru 14-friendly; increase in annual *cumulative* participation of (includes leveraged outcomes of, for example, at least 200) rural women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas in STEM-related activities relevant to USDA mission science;
  - Means by which the outcomes will be analyzed, assessed, or interpreted (include metrics such as gain in knowledge, skills and capabilities – measured as new degrees obtained, certificates, enrollment in courses, teaching of new skills to others, etc.; new participants (families, teachers, communities, children, youth) in USDA mission science through outreach activities, new careers or entrepreneurial enterprise by participants in WAMS fields);
  - How will the project be sustained beyond the life of the grant;
  - Pitfalls that may be encountered and proposals for how they will be addressed;
  - Limitations to proposed procedures; and
  - A brief timeline of the proposed project.
5. **Key Personnel and Responsibilities:** Personnel who will directly contribute to and perform activities in the WAMS project must have their roles and responsibilities identified. Indicate for which WAMS proposed project objective(s) each key personnel will have responsibility. Spell out responsible parties, where appropriate cooperating institutions or organizations, their roles and responsibilities and their personnel.

6. **Expected Outcomes and Evaluation:** Identify appropriate methodologies for reviewing and evaluating the project and expected project outcomes. Provide information that would include key elements about the nature of the learner; what approaches worked to impact increase participation of women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas in STEM fields, relevant to USDA mission; what change(s) occurred as a result of the project as determined by comparison of the baseline pre-project to post-project; to what extent is the pathway reproducible, scalable, and portable. The development of a Logic Model as the proposed project is planned and executed will strengthen the potential for successful project outcomes. This information may be provided as a narrative or formatted into a logic model chart. The logic model planning process is a tool that should be used to develop your project **before** writing your proposal. See Part IV.B.3(f) for details on where to attach this information to your application. More information and resources related to the logic model planning process are provided at [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/about/strat\\_plan\\_logic\\_models.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/about/strat_plan_logic_models.html). Discuss plans to identify successes and build upon and disseminate them. Provide the numbers of students (or faculty) currently involved in food and agricultural activities and the number for those expected to be directly and indirectly impacted by activities.

c. *Field 9, Bibliography & Cited References* - (Optional PDF Attachment. No Page Limit). Title the attachment as 'Bibliography & References Cited' in the document header and save file as 'Bibliography & References Cited'.

All work cited in the text, including that of key personnel, should be referenced in this section of the application. All references must:

- Be complete;
- Include titles and all co-authors;
- Conform to an acceptable journal format; and
- Be listed in alphabetical order using the last name of the first author or listed by number in the order of citation.

References are not considered in the page limitation for the Project Narrative.

d. *Field 10. Facilities & Other Resources.* - (Optional PDF Attachment).

If needed, describe the types, location, and availability of instrumentation and physical facilities necessary to carry out the work proposed. **If special academic, private or government laboratories or facilities are being used, include a letter in the application from the authorized representative of the facility describing the proposed arrangements and availability.** This letter should be included as a part of Other Attachments, Field 12 below.

e. *Field 11. Equipment Documentation* - (Optional PDF Attachment).



Equipment purchased (defined as in excess of \$5,000 for each item or other threshold as determined by proposing organization) must be fully justified under this section. Other purchases (e.g., computers, laboratory materials, etc.) are described, instead, in the Budget Justification section under the 'Materials and Supplies' line item.

f. *Field 12. Other Attachments.*

- **Appendices to Project Narrative – PDF Attachment.** Title the attachment as 'Appendices' in the document header and save file as 'Appendices'.

Appendices are strictly limited to two (2) examples of materials from previous projects similar to those proposed in this project.

- Reprints (papers that have been published in peer-reviewed journals); and
- Preprints (only manuscripts in press for a peer-reviewed journal will be accepted and must be accompanied by letters of acceptance from the publishing journals). Preprints attached in support of the application should be single-spaced. Each preprint must be identified with the name of the submitting organization, the name(s) of the PD(s), and the title of the application.

Information may not be appended to an application to circumvent page limitations prescribed for the Project Narrative. Extraneous materials will not be used during the peer review process.

- **Stakeholder Implementation Plan – (PDF Attachment).** Title attachment "Stakeholder Implementation Plan" in the document header and save file as "Stakeholder Implementation Plan".
- **Logic Model – (PDF Attachment. 2-Page Limit).** Title the attachment 'Logic Model' and save file as 'Logic Model'. For guidance, see [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/about/strat\\_plan\\_logic\\_models.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/about/strat_plan_logic_models.html).
- **Management Plan – (PDF Attachment. 3-Page Limit).** Title the attachment 'Management Plan' and save file as 'Management Plan'.

Each WAMS project must propose a lifecycle approach that will address recruitment, training, successful placement, and participation in STEM fields relevant to USDA mission. The complexity of the WAMS projects therefore makes it important to have a clearly articulated management plan. Relate the experience your organization and key staff have in designing and operating activities similar to those described in this request for applications. Explain the selection of partner institutions by describing their roles and activities in the proposed project. Explain how the partnership will be managed. Describe the commitment of your organization and your partners to this project and how the project will be sustained beyond the period of the award. Include a strategy to

enhance coordination, collaboration, communication, tracking success of participants in STEM fields, and data sharing and reporting among members of the project team and stakeholder groups.

- **Collaborative Efforts:** Cooperative, multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary applications are encouraged. For the WAMS grants program, successful project outcomes can be facilitated through collaborative efforts that will allow WAMS projects to meet the workforce needs in STEM fields for local, state, region, and/or national opportunities. Describe leveraging of resources in partnerships, at the project level, to contribute to achieving the WAMS program goals. Identify each institutional unit contributing to the proposed project and designate the lead institution or institutional unit. When appropriate, the project should be coordinated with the efforts of other state and/or national programs. Clearly describe and define the programmatic roles, responsibilities and budget for each collaborator: (1) A signed letter of Agreement by the collaborating institution or organization Authorizing Representative (AR) or Certifying Official indicating acceptance of the role in the proposed project; (2) a detailed statement of work outlining what role collaborating partner(s) will play, principals involved and detailed deliverables and timeframes; and, (3) a detailed budget for collaborating institution(s) or organization(s). A Biographical Sketch (vitae) should be provided for key personnel the collaborating institution or organization.

Also, explain how the project will maximize other partnership ventures and collaborative efforts to strengthen the food and agricultural sciences STEM workforce. Also, explain how the project will stimulate participation of women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas in STEM fields, in academia, federal, state, local, Tribal government, or the private sector in enhancing food and agricultural sciences, especially in rural communities.

- **Request for Determination:** (PDF Attachment. 3-Page Limit). If an applicant proposes to submit an application to assist an underrepresented minority group or groups from a rural area that is not specifically identified in the Definitions section of the RFA (see Part VIII.E), the applicant must attach to this field documentation, including national survey data, supporting the request. Title the attachment 'Request for Determination' and save file as 'Request for Determination'.

#### **4. R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 5. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. A Senior/Key Person Profile should be completed for the PD and each co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel.

(1) Attach Biographical Sketch Field – (PDF Attachment. 2-Page Limit, excluding publications listings). A biographical sketch (vitae) of the PD and each co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel should be included. Title the attachment 'Biographical Sketch' in the document header and save file as 'Biographical Sketch'.

(2) Attach Current and Pending Support Field – (PDF Attachment. No Page Limit). Title the attachment ‘Current and Pending Support’ in the document header and save file as ‘Current and Pending Support’.

A suggested template for the Current and Pending Support can be found at:  
[http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/templates/current\\_pending.doc](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/templates/current_pending.doc).

Current and Pending Support information is only required for personnel with PD or co-PD indicated as their Project Role on the R&R Senior/Key Person Profile. All applications must contain a list of all Current and Pending Support detailing public or private support (including in-house support) to which personnel identified in the application have committed portions of their time, whether or not salary support for person(s) involved is included in the budget(see link to template above). Please note that the project being proposed should be included in the pending section of the form. Total project time listed for each PD should be indicated as a percent effort and should not exceed 100% for concurrent projects.

**5. R&R Personal Data** – As noted in Part V, 6., the submission of this information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award. **If completing the information, do not enter any data in the field requesting the social security number.**

**6. R&R Budget**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 7. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

Applications must contain an annual budget for each year of the project and a cumulative budget. A Budget Narrative in PDF format that justifies and documents specific expenditures and subcontracts is required. The budget should include cost to attend at least one Project Directors’ meeting. Reasonable travel and associated costs are allowable under the terms of this grant.

Matching funds:

If an applicant concludes that matching funds are not required as specified under Part III, B. Cost-sharing or matching, a justification should be included in the budget narrative. NIFA will consider this justification when ascertaining final matching requirements or in determining if required matching can be waived. NIFA retains the right to make final determinations regarding matching requirements.

For those grants requiring matching funds as specified under Part III, B., the budget narrative should include written verification of commitments of matching support (including both cash and in-kind contributions) from third parties. Written verification means:

- (a) For any third party cash contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each donation, signed by the authorized representatives of the donor organization and

the applicant organization, which must include: (1) The name, address, and telephone number of the donor; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made; (4) the dollar amount of the cash donation (the budget narrative must describe how the cash donation will be used on the project); and (5) a statement that the donor will pay the cash contribution during the grant period; and (b) For any third party in-kind contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each contribution, signed by the authorized representatives of the donor organization and the applicant organization, which must include: (1) The name, address, and telephone number of the donor; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made; (4) a good faith estimate of the current fair market value of the third party in kind contribution and a description of how the fair market value was determined; and (5) a statement that the donor will make the contribution during the grant period.

The sources and amount of all matching support from outside the applicant institution should be summarized on a separate page and placed in the proposal as part of the Budget Narrative. All pledge agreements must be placed in the proposal immediately following the summary of matching support.

The value of applicant contributions to the project shall be established in accordance with applicable cost principles. Applicants should refer to OMB Circular A-21 (2 CFR Part 220), Cost Principles for Educational Institutions, for further guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs. **All contributions, including cash and third party in-kind, must meet the criteria included in section 23 of 7 CFR 3019, “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-profit Organizations.”**

**7. R&R Subaward Budget Attachment** (Only required if submitting a Subaward Proposal) All subawards’ budgets must be included the R&R Subaward Budget Attachment. Annual budget(s) including a budget justification and a cumulative budget are required for each subcontractual arrangement.

### **8. Supplemental Information Form**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part VI, 1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. *Field 2.* Program Code – Enter the program code name (i.e., enter “Women and Minorities in STEM Fields”) and the program code (i.e., enter “WAM”).

b. *Field 8.* Conflict of Interest List – **A conflict of interest list is required under this program.** Include this one-page attachment even if your responses to the questions are “N/A”.

A Conflict of Interest List must be provided for all individuals who have submitted a Biographical Sketch (vitae). Collate all Conflict of Interest lists into a single document.

The list must be prepared as a table with headings and include complete information described under each heading. The headings are: (1) Name (please provide first name, middle initial, and last name); (2) Name of institution and or organization of affiliation; and (3) Category(ies) of conflict (see descriptions below). **The lists can only be submitted as a single PDF attachment.**

For all individuals who have submitted a Biographical Sketch (vitae), list alphabetically by last name (and with last name first) the full names of individuals and indicate which categorical conflict(s) listed below applies:

- (a) All co-authors on publications within the past three years, including pending publications and submissions;
- (b) All collaborators on projects within the past three years, including current and planned collaborations;
- (c) All thesis or postdoctoral advisees/advisors; and
- (d) All persons in your field with whom you have had a consulting/financial arrangement/other conflict-of-interest in the past three years.

A suggested template for the Conflict of Interest List can be found at:  
[http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/templates/conflict\\_of\\_interest.doc](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/templates/conflict_of_interest.doc).

Note: Other individuals working in the applicant's specific area are not in conflict with the applicant unless those individuals fall within one of the listed categories. The National Program Leader(s) responsible for the WAMS program must be informed of any additional conflicts of interest that arise after the application is submitted.

### **C. Submission Dates and Times**

**Instructions for submitting an application are included in Part IV, Section 1.9 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.**

Applications must be received by close of business on June 7, 2010 (5:00 pm Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

Correspondence regarding submitted applications will be sent using email. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate email addresses, where designated, on the SF 424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

If the AR has not received a confirmation message **from NIFA** regarding a submitted application within 30 days of the established deadline, please contact the Program Contact identified in Part VII of the applicable RFA and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel or a delay in the issuance of an award. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.**

## **D. Funding Restrictions**

Section 7132 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA) (Pub. L 110-246), amended section 1462 of the National Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3310(a)), regarding recovery of indirect costs. The recovery of indirect costs on awards made by NIFA under this program may not exceed the lesser of the institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 22 percent of total Federal funds awarded.

**Program funds may only be used for research and extension activities in the training, outreach and mentoring of rural women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas in STEM fields relevant to USDA mission.** Funds made available for grants in this program shall not be used for the construction of a new building or facility or the acquisition, expansion, remodeling, or alteration of an existing building or facility (including site grading and improvement, and architect fees).

### **Special Notices (Applicable to Grantees and Subcontractors)**

1. NIFA will withhold all funds for a WAMS award to an applicant requesting indirect costs if the applicant has not negotiated an indirect cost rate with its cognizant federal agency.
2. If a grantee is in the process of negotiating an indirect cost rate with its cognizant federal agency, NIFA will withhold all funds from that grantee until the indirect cost rate has been established.
3. If an institution's indirect cost rate has expired or will expire in the near future, a clear statement on renegotiation efforts must be included in the application. (See Part IV.B.6. R&R Budget, above.)
4. It is incumbent on all applicants to have a current indirect cost rate or begin negotiations to establish an indirect cost rate prior to the WAMS submission deadline. Because it may take several months to obtain an indirect cost rate, applicants needing an indirect cost rate are encouraged to start work on establishing these rates well in advance of submitting a WAMS application.
5. In lieu of requesting indirect costs (if the applicant does not have a negotiated rate), an applicant may prepare a budget in which all charges in the budget are included as direct costs. However, costs normally considered indirect costs may not be charged as a direct cost to the grant.
6. Billing rates may be established for primary awardee, but not for subawardees.

## E. Other Submission Requirements

The applicant should follow the submission requirements noted in the document entitled, “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.Gov”.

Described below are the requirements for successful submission of an application, all of the following steps must be met for an application to be considered for peer review:

- 1) Meeting the deadline: To electronically send the application to Grants.gov the submit button is hit, which triggers a date and time stamp on the application. The date and time stamp is used to determine whether the application was received by Grants.gov before the deadline, which is prior to close of business (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time) on **June 7, 2010**. An application submitted or resubmitted after the deadline is late. Consideration of late applications is only given in extenuating circumstances (e.g., natural disasters, confirmed Grants.gov outage) with proper documentation and support of the Agency Contact (see Part VII). The occurrence of one of these situations does not automatically ensure that a late application will be accepted. If an applicant wants a late application considered under an extenuating circumstance, the applicant should contact the Agency Contact accordingly.
- 2) Successful Grants.gov validation: The Grants.gov system performs a limited check of the application, and applicants are notified by Grants.gov of the outcome of the initial review. Applications meeting Grants.gov requirements are made available to the funding agency for further processing. Applications that fail Grants.gov validation may be resubmitted to Grants.gov if the original agency deadline has not passed. (Note that the Grants.gov system may allow applications to be submitted after the deadline has passed, but the application is considered late by NIFA.)
- 3) Successful Agency validation: NIFA staff perform a precursory review of the application. The agency validation process includes, for example, meeting eligibility requirements and following agency application guidelines (e.g., formatting, page limitations, limits on budget requests). Applicants are notified by NIFA of the outcome of this review.

## **PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS**

### **A. General**

Each application will be evaluated in a two-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a review panel.

WAMS proposal will be evaluated using a peer review process to find win-win matches between the proposed work, capabilities of applicant organization(s), and the WAMS grant program purpose, priorities and goals. Reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, and managers/operators in STEM fields) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

### **B. Evaluation Criteria**

The evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA. The percentage weight that will be given to each criterion is listed after the criterion.

Following the completion of a peer review process for grant proposals received under this section, the Secretary shall provide a priority to those grant proposals, found in the peer review process to be scientifically meritorious, that involve the cooperation of multiple entities [see 7 U.S.C. § 5925{d}]. NIFA encourages applicants to (i) develop robust collaborations that include governmental, non-governmental, P-14 education, and community-based organizations with expertise in training and outreach to women and underrepresented minorities, from rural areas, in STEM fields relevant to USDA mission; and (ii) state what percentage of the project budget will be designated for use in identifying, **recruiting and placing** women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas in STEM fields.

All project applications submitted for funding shall be technically evaluated by a review panel using the criteria below, specifically:



- **Relevancy (20%)** – Explanation and documentation that the project is directed toward: (i) specific areas identified in Part I, B in this RFA. These areas are designed to yield improvements in participation in STEM fields by women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas as defined in FCEA; and (ii) collaborations that align with the proposed project’s objectives and WAMS grant program goals.
- **Technical merit (35%)** – will be evaluated on the basis of:
  - (a) Necessity, innovation, and originality,
  - (b) For proposed projects with research components, as practicable, scientifically sound approach, and potential to increase knowledge not only in STEM research but also in attracting women and minorities from rural areas in areas of STEM fields relevant to USDA mission
  - (c) Demonstrated awareness of previous and alternative research, extension, training, outreach, mentoring and education programs that address the needs identified for the target audience;
  - (d) Clarity and delineation of objectives and outcomes and alignment of the proposed project with the WAMS program purpose, priorities, and goal;
  - (e) Conceptual adequacy of the proposed activities to meet the needs of the targeted audience including suitability and feasibility of the approach;
  - (f) Expected outcomes of the project in terms of the number of women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas trained and placed in the STEM workforce, the value of their enterprise, and the needs of the targeted audience;
  - (g) Probability of success of the project; and
  - (h) Sustainability beyond the life of the grant.
- **Achievability (15%)** - Probability of success of the project is appropriate given the level of originality, and target audience.
- **Key personnel (10%)** - Demonstration of feasibility through prior experience in research, extension, education, outreach, mentoring, and training of women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas. Also, qualifications of key personnel to conduct the proposed project and institutional experience and competence in serving the needs of the identified target audience.
- **Adequacy of available or obtainable support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation (10%).** – Demonstration that the personnel, collaborations and facilities and instrumentation are available, committed and well-positioned to achieve the integration needed to ensure that the WAMS project will recruit, lead/train and place the target audience in STEM fields at the level and scale(s) to increase America’s competitiveness.
- **Adequacy of Plans for Management of the proposed project (10%),** including: time allocated for systematic attainment of objectives; effective functioning of collaboration(s) to have a strong workflow scheme that facilitates successful

### **C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality**

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution shall be determined by reference to the current Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 648, Falls Church, Virginia 22042. Phone: (703) 532-2300. Web site: <http://www.hepinc.com>.

Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.

### **D. Organizational Management Information**

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one time basis, with updates on an as needed basis, as part of the responsibility determination prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another NIFA program. NIFA will provide copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the preaward process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on his/her status as one of these entities, there are factors which may exclude an applicant from receiving federal financial and non-financial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

## **PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION**

### **A. General**

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official of NIFA shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the awarding official of NIFA as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. It should be noted that the project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by NIFA under this RFA shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's assistance regulations (parts 3015, 3019 of 7 CFR).

### **B. Award Notice**

The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the following:

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Director has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;
- (2) Title of project;
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PDs chosen to direct and control approved activities;
- (4) Identifying award number assigned by the Department;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;
- (6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Director during the project period;
- (7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
- (9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view NIFA award terms and conditions);

(10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and

(11) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by NIFA to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

### **C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

Several Federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These include, but are not limited to:

7 CFR Part 1, subpart A—USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

7 CFR Part 3—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129 regarding debt collection.

7 CFR Part 15, subpart A—USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

7 CFR Part 331 and 9 CFR Part 121—USDA implementation of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002.

7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21, A-87 and A-122 (now relocated at 2 CFR Parts 220, 225 and 230 respectively), and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

7 CFR Part 3017—USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement).

7 CFR Part 3018—USDA implementation of Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.

7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations (2 CFR Part 215).

7 CFR Part 3021—Governmentwide Requirements for Drug Free Workplace (Grants).

7 CFR Part 3052—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non profit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3407—NIFA procedures to implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

7 CFR Part 3430—Competitive and Noncompetitive Nonformula Grant Programs—General Grant Administrative Provisions and Program.

29 U.S.C. 794 (section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and 7 CFR Part 15b (USDA implementation of statute) —prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in Federally assisted programs.

35 U.S.C. 200 et seq. —Bayh Dole Act, controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in Federally assisted programs (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR Part 401).

## **D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements**

### **Current Research Information System Required Reporting:**

Grantees are required to submit initial project information and annual and summary reports to NIFA **Current Research Information System (CRIS)**. The CRIS database contains narrative project information, progress/impact statements, and final technical reports that are made available to the public. For applications recommended for funding, instructions on preparing and submission of project documentation will be provided to the applicant by the Agency Contact. **Documentation must be submitted to CRIS before NIFA funds will be released.** Project reports will be requested by the CRIS office when required. For more information about CRIS, visit <http://cris.nifa.usda.gov>.

### **Annual Performance Report:**

Annual performance reports are due 90 days after the anniversary date of the award and should be submitted to the NIFA's CRIS.

Annual performance reports must:

- 1) identify each participant of target audience (women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas in STEM fields) in advancing from the baseline established in funded objectives;
- 2) address the collaborations and placement of WAMS target audiences to demonstrate gainful employment in STEM fields;
- 3) provide a comparison of actual accomplishments as gains in STEM knowledge skills and capabilities, as well as new participants in USDA mission science through outreach activities, new careers or entrepreneurial enterprise with the goals established for the reporting period;
- 4) if established goals were not met, give the reasons;

- 5) include documentation of outputs; i.e., significant activities, including dissemination activities, events, services or products that contribute toward achieving the goals and objectives of the project;
- 6) include outcomes/impacts; i.e., a change in knowledge, actions or conditions; and
- 7) include any other indication of increased capacity for carrying out the USDA mission.

### **Final Technical Report:**

A final technical report must be submitted to CRIS within 90 days after the expiration date of the project. The expiration date is specified in the award documents and modifications thereto, if any. Generally, the final technical report should be a summary of the completed project, including:

1. Identify all of the WAMS project participants from the target audience who were recruited, trained and gainfully employed (full funding details and funds aligned to each beneficiary for the target audience will be needed);
2. A review of project objectives, tracking success on participants in STEM fields beyond funding, and accomplishments;
3. A description of outcomes resulting from the project and activities undertaken to disseminate these outcomes;
4. An explanation of partnerships and collaborative ventures that resulted from the project, including future initiatives that are planned as a result of the project;
5. A description of the project's impact on the PD(s), the institution(s) involved, and the community;
6. Any pertinent data on project personnel and beneficiaries. The final technical report also must contain any other information specified in the terms and conditions of the award; and,
7. Hard copies or samples of products or publications resulting from this project must be sent to the NIFA National Program Leader overseeing WAMS (see Part VII)

### **Project Director's Conference:**

During the tenure of a grant, PDs must attend at least one NIFA sponsored PD meeting. The timing and intervals for PD meetings are determined by the WAMS program office. A reasonable amount for travel costs to attend the meeting should be included in the budget. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss project and grant management, opportunities for collaborative efforts, partnerships and capacity building, project updates/presentations, future directions for program reform, and opportunities to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results.

For informational purposes, the "Federal Financial Report," Form SF-425, consolidates into a single report the former Financial Status Report (SF-269 and SF-269A) and the Federal Cash Transactions Report (SF-272 and SF-272A). The [NIFA Agency-specific Terms and Conditions](#) include the requirement that Form SF-425 is due on a **quarterly basis no later than 30 days following the end of each reporting period. A final**

**“Federal Financial Report,” Form SF-425, is due 90 days after the expiration date of this award.**

## **PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT**

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact the NIFA WAMS NPL:

**Audrey A. Trotman, PhD;**

National Education Program Leader;

Science and Education Resources Development;

National Institute of Food and Agriculture;

USDA;

STOP 2250; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2250;

telephone: 202-720-1973;

fax: 202-720-2030;

e-mail: [WAMS@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:WAMS@nifa.usda.gov)



## **PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION**

### **A. Access to Review Information**

Copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments will be sent to the applicant PD after the review process has been completed.

### **B. Use of Funds; Changes**

#### **1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility**

Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, the awardee may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

#### **2. Changes in Project Plans**

a. The permissible changes by the awardee, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other similar aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project's approved goals. If the awardee or the PD(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) for a final determination. The ADO is the signatory of the award document, not the program contact.

b. Changes in approved goals or objectives shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved which are outside the scope of the original approved project.

c. Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes.

d. Transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not Federal funds are involved, shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

e. The project period may be extended by NIFA without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the ADO determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed five years. Any extension of time shall be conditioned upon prior request by the awardee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

f. Changes in Approved Budget: Unless stated otherwise in the terms and conditions of award, changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to instituting such changes if the revision will involve transfers

or expenditures of amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or award.

### **C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards**

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of NIFA transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by the Agency for a period of three years. Other copies will be destroyed. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

### **D. Regulatory Information**

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule related Notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of the Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this Notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

### **E. Definitions**

Please refer to [7 CFR 3430, Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Federal Assistance Programs--General Award Administrative Provisions](#) for the applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program.

For the purpose of this program, the following additional definitions are applicable:

Director means the Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and any other officer or employee of the NIFA to whom the authority involved is delegated.

Rural Area means any locality that has a population of 50,000 inhabitants or less, and is generally characterized as having fewer than 1,000 inhabitants per square mile (U.S. Census Bureau).

Training means the planned and systematic acquisition of practical knowledge, skills or competencies required for a trade, occupation or profession delivered by formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, or practicum experience that prepares women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas for participation in STEM fields.

Underrepresented minority means any ethnic group – African American, Alaskan Native, American Indian, Asian-American, Hispanic American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, or any other group – whose representation among food and agricultural professionals in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields is disproportionately less than their proportion in the general population as indicated in standard statistical references, or as documented on a case-by-case basis by national survey data submitted to and accepted by the Secretary.

## Application Submission Checklist

*(Disclaimer Note: This checklist is included for the sole purpose of assisting the applicant in the self review process prior to submission. Applicant should use the RFA as the instrument of instruction and the Application Guide to complete the application process. This checklist is NOT an official portion of the RFA and should in no way be considered a replacement for the Application Guide or instructions contained within the RFA.)*

Only electronic applications may be submitted to NIFA via Grants.gov unless indicated otherwise in the specific program Request for Applications (RFA). All applications submitted to NIFA must contain the applicable elements outlined in these guidelines. The following checklist has been prepared to assist in ensuring that the application is complete prior to submission:

- ☐ **Are you eligible to apply for the funding offered in the RFA?**  
Eligibility information for each funding opportunity is stated in Part III, Eligibility Information, of each RFA.
- ☐ **Has your institution properly registered with Grants.gov to enable you to submit an application?**  
Those who wish to submit an application to NIFA should first contact their Authorized Representative (AR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit applications through Grants.gov. See [www.grants.gov/applicants/get\\_registered.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp) for steps to preparing to submit applications through Grants.gov.
- ☐ **Are you applying to the correct funding opportunity associated with the RFA?**  
Field 1 of the NIFA Supplemental Information Form will pre-populate to indicate the program to which you are applying.
- ☐ **Have you followed the guidelines for filling out your electronic application provided in the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide, which is posted along with the SF 424 R&R application package on Grants.gov?**  
Electronic applications should be prepared according to the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide and the specific program RFA. This guide is part of the corresponding electronic application package for the specific program to which you are applying.
- ☐ **Have all attachments been submitted in the portable document format (PDF)?**  
NIFA will only accept PDF attachments. See Part III of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.
- ☐ **Do all submitted PDF documents have one-inch margins and are typed or word processed using no type smaller than 12 point regardless of line spacing? Are all PDF documents numbered sequentially on each page of the attachment? Are all page limitations for a given attachment followed?**  
Submitted proposals that do not meet these requirements for PDF attachments may not be reviewed.
- ☐ **Did you use the “Check Package for Errors” feature (see section 1.8 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide)?**

- ☐ **Have all required components of the SF 424 Research and Related (R&R) Application Package posted under the funding opportunity on Grants.gov been completed?**  
Mandatory Forms? Optional Forms?

**SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet**

- ☐ Have all required fields (highlighted in yellow) been completed?

**R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)**

- ☐ Have all required fields (highlighted in yellow) been completed?

**R&R Other Project Information**

- ☐ Have the fields describing project potential or actual environmental impact been properly completed?

**Project Summary/Abstract**

- ☐ Has the Project Summary PDF been attached to this form in Field 7?
- ☐ Are the names and affiliated organizations of all Project Directors listed at the top of the page in addition to the title of the project?
- ☐ Does this section adhere to the format and page limitations?
- ☐ Did you use the suggested Project Summary/Abstract Template found at:  
[www.nifa.usda.gov/home/faq\\_apply.html#abstract?](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/home/faq_apply.html#abstract?)

**Project Narrative**

- ☐ Has the Project Narrative PDF been attached to this form in Field 8?
- ☐ Is the project fully described?
- ☐ Does this section adhere to the format and page limitations?

**Bibliography & References Cited**

- ☐ Has the Bibliography & References Cited PDF been attached to this form in Field 9?
- ☐ Are all references cited and are all citations referenced?
- ☐ Do all citations contain a title, the names of all authors, and are they in accepted journal format?

**Facilities & Other Resources**

- ☐ Has the Facilities & Other Resources PDF been attached to this form in Field 10?
- ☐ Has a description of your facilities, sufficient to indicate that you will be able to carry out this project, been given?

**Equipment**

- ☐ Has the Equipment PDF been attached to this form in Field 11?
- ☐ Is the description of your equipment sufficient to indicate that you will be able to carry out this project?

**Appendices to Project Description**

- ☐ Has the Appendices to Project Description PDF been attached to this form in Field 12?

**Collaborative Arrangements**

- ☐ Has the Collaborative Arrangements PDF been attached to this form in Field 12?

### **R&R Senior/Key Person Profile**

#### **Biographical Sketch**

- ☐ Has the biographical sketch (vitae) PDF for the PD and each co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel been attached?

#### **Current and Pending Support**

- ☐ Has the current and pending support PDF for key personnel been attached?
- ☐ Have all current and pending projects been listed and summarized, **including this proposal?**
- ☐ Did you use the suggested Current and Pending Support Template?

#### **R&R Personal Data** (voluntary)

- ☐ Have all fields been completed, except social security number?

#### **R&R Budget**

- ☐ Have all fields been completed for each PD and co-PD(s)?
- ☐ Are annual and summary budgets included? For multi-institution applications, has a subaward budget been included for each institution involved?

#### **Budget Justification**

- ☐ Has the Budget Justification PDF been attached to this form in Field K?
- ☐ Are budget items individually justified?
- ☐ For multi-institutional applications, has a subaward budget justification been included for each institution involved?
- ☐ Have you clearly indicated funds requested to attend a Project Director's Workshop?

#### **NIFA Supplemental Information Form**

- ☐ Has Field 1 been pre-populated?
- ☐ Does Field 2 indicate the Program Code Name and Program Code to which you are applying?

#### **Conflict of Interest List**

- ☐ Has the Conflict of Interest List PDF been attached to this form in Field 8?
- ☐ Has a Conflict of Interest List been provided for all individuals who have submitted a Biographical Sketch?
- ☐ Did you use the suggested Conflict of Interest Template suggested?